

The Open Mike^{District 2}

A Newsletter From Councilman **Mike Knapp**

Volume 4, Number 2

Spring 2008

A Moment at the Mike

Budgets, Frankly

No four words seem to chill the spine quicker than “We need to talk.” The stuff of broken hearts and two-week groundings, those four words generally connote a level of seriousness and frankness we’re uncomfortable with. But the discussion that follows is almost always necessary, and when it’s over, both parties to it are generally glad they’ve had it.

Now, having said that . . . we need to talk.

As I write this, the County Council is deep into its consideration of two important budgets, the FY09 Operating Budget, which funds county programs, and the FY09-14 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget, which lays out the amounts we’ll spend on infrastructure over the next six years. The proposed operating budget, which includes funding for Montgomery County Public Schools, is about \$4.3 billion, while the CIP budget request is approximately \$1.8 billion, spread out over six years, or \$300 million annually.

That’s a lot of money—your money—the Council is looking at, and there are a lot of things the Council can spend it on. And every year, we’re trying to do more—every day, new requests come in from residents who’d like more money for a specific program or project. The problem is, this year we’ve got less money to do it with.

That’s not to say that the roughly \$4.3 billion in the budget request isn’t a lot of money. It is. But given the nation’s current fiscal slump, it’s not as much as we thought we would have.

Consequently, we’re not going to be able to fund services in ways we had envisioned earlier. We’ve got to slow down our rate of spending, manage our expectations of government, and



Councilmember Mike Knapp

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determine what our priorities are when it comes to allocating limited resources to what sometimes seems a countless number of programs.

The choices are difficult, but far reaching. Each and every function of government—classrooms and teachers, police officers, literacy programs, parks, affordable housing, art programs—are vying for a smaller pot of money. As much as people get annoyed when I use this example, sometimes it comes down to deciding whether you want to pay for more police officers, or keep a library open an extra day. It's not a decision I like making either—but decisions are going to have to be made.

If residents demand services at levels that exceed our current expenditures, then responsible budgeting means making it clear how government goes about raising the revenue to pay for those services.

And you've been helping. We had more than 150 speakers at a public hearing on the budget earlier this month, and it was one of the most useful sessions I think we've had at the Council in a long time. You and your neighbors brought to our attention lots of small or lower profile programs that exist below the radar and usually out of the papers. We learned, for example, about drug rehabilitation facilities, and what families go through when they're waiting for a limited number of beds in those facilities to open up so a loved one can get treatment. We heard about Project Lifesaver, a program through the police department, that gives individuals with disabilities a locating device.

The testimony we heard put a very human face on these programs—programs many had never thought much about before, apart from a line-item in the budget. It reminded me that there is a constituency for everything that we fund –

these things make a big difference in their lives. These are the small programs that are also competing for your money—and I think you'd be glad to know those programs are there, helping those who need it most. The point is, your money does a lot for a lot of people, including you.

I've been reading the same things in the newspaper that you have. Things cost more than they did last year, and you don't necessarily have more money to buy them with. When it comes to making ends meet, you've got to make some decisions and set priorities. You can't stop feeding your family, obviously, but maybe you buy more ground beef and less steak. Do you buy a new car or keep the old one? Odds are, you'll probably keep the old car running for another year.

It's the same with the county government—things cost more, and we don't have more money to compensate for increasing costs, so we set priorities and manage expectations. We slow the rate at which we renovate a building, for example. We eat hamburger instead of steak.

Since I came to the Council in 2002, I've been a stickler for responsible budgeting—for crafting a budget that is fair, accountable, and stays within our spending limits. At the moment, we're working to determine whether the budget can stay within the spending affordability guidelines. A responsible budget is one you can afford—and if residents demand services at a level that exceeds our current expenditures, then responsible budgeting also means making it clear how government goes about raising revenue to pay for those services, whether through new fees, taxes, or changes in credit.

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It's also critical that we appreciate what it really means when we invest in a program. The truth is, government isn't programs or policies, it's people. It takes people to teach in classrooms, put out fires, drive buses, counsel students, trim trees, pave roads, and clean buildings. Too often, when we hear that much of our county budget goes to employee salaries, there's a rolling of the eyes, and a groaning that we're simply investing in Yet Another Government Worker instead of a quality programs. People are our first and best investment, and they're the engine that make government run—and more often than not, they don't make all that much money doing it. There has been a lot of discussion about what an 'appropriate' cost-of-living increase is for our employees given the current fiscal climate. On the one hand, we have a contract with our employees in which we have committed to them certain salary increases. The contract didn't include a clause saying "...and if fiscal times are tough, that's too bad." Perhaps it should. On the other hand, though, is it fair to raise everyone's taxes to provide our workers with pay increases? I've been hearing from you on this already, so keep talking.

In short, it's my intention to make the budget process open, accessible (check out our [new budget web page](#), where I've asked that we place all budget-related documents so you can find them), and affordable—but that's going to take a lot of work. It won't make everyone happy—heck, it won't make me happy. But just as you do every day, county government has to do its best to live within its budget. I'm trying to ensure it does so as reasonably—indeed, as humanely—as possible.

Just as you do every day, county government has to do its best to live within its budget. I'm trying to ensure it does so as reasonably—indeed, as humanely—as possible.

The Council received the County Executive's Operating Budget on March 17, held public hearings from April 7 through 10, and the committees have been working diligently to determine the best use of funding for programs within their jurisdictions. The full Council will keep working on the operating and CIP budgets until May 22, when we will finally vote on the budget.

At the moment, I can't tell you what the final budget will look like, whether we'll stay within the charter limit, or whether your favorite program or project will be funded at a certain level. There is still much work to be done between now and May 22. It won't be easy, but I think it'll be worth it to have a budget we can afford.

There. I'm glad we talked. Now keep talking. [E-mail me with your comments](#), and let me know if I can be of any assistance. It's my pleasure to serve.

Regards,



Michael J. Knapp
Councilmember, District 2

Another Moment at the Mike:

A Capital Bit of Work



One of the most important responsibilities of county government is to ensure its residents have adequate infrastructure – that's a fancy way of saying we need to build and maintain things like fire and police departments, roads, schools, libraries, parks, and recreation centers. These are things that make our community a safer, healthier, and better place to live—and every two years, the county council reviews its Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Budget to determine how to spend more than \$1 billion dollars over the next six years.

That leads me to another important responsibility of government—indeed, perhaps the most important responsibility—and that is ensuring that government spends your money wisely. And balancing both of these responsibilities—the need to invest in infrastructure and the need to invest wisely—can sometimes be difficult. Buildings age, sidewalks crumble, schools need renovating, libraries need new shelves, and just keeping up with maintenance can get costly. When you add to that the new buildings that need to be built each year, it adds up in a hurry—so fast, in fact, that the annual costs for repairs, upkeep, and building new facilities far exceeds our annual budget.

If you're a homeowner or renter, you know what I'm talking about. As you start your spring cleaning and begin eying those little things around the house that need repairing, painting, cleaning, or replacing, you know how fast the costs can add up. And if you want to stay within your own household budget, that means setting priorities. Do we repair that squeaky door or replace that aging gutter? Do we need a brand new front door screen, or can we make it last one more year with a little bit of care? Like you, government has to keep an eye on spending—it's your money, after all—and that means we also have to set priorities in determining what gets built, repaired, renovated, or improved.

That's a long way of saying that our CIP budget is one of the important, and toughest, the County Council has to consider. Our task is made that much more difficult this year by the sagging economic outlook. Given the current situation, the Council will be facing some hard choices regarding what gets funded and what doesn't.

In years previous, we've used the County Executive's proposed CIP as a starting point, working within his recommendations, then adding council priorities at the end of the process. But that doesn't really work—too often, we end up with a long list of projects that might be funded if money were to free up, which means they usually weren't funded. That wasn't fair to the folks who saw their school or park or library on the list and raised their expectations, only to be told at the end of the fiscal year that there wasn't enough money for their particular project.

Rather than wait until the last day of the budget process to unveil a CIP budget, I presented to the Council -- as early in the process as I could -- my proposed reconciliation of the capital budget.

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Annapolis Update

Legislature Addresses Energy, Foreclosure Reform, New Taxes



The Maryland State Assembly adjourned on Monday, April 7. As it worked to address Maryland's current fiscal woes, the legislature took action to help residents with electricity bills and home foreclosures, even as it approved a \$1.4 billion package of tax increases. And Montgomery County residents are going to feel the pinch.

Faced with an unpopular computer services tax—a tax that state legislators feared would drive small and large businesses out of Maryland into surrounding areas—the legislature repealed the computer services tax—which generated about \$200 million—and replaced it with a so-called “millionaires tax.” The new tax establishes a new tax bracket of 6.25 percent on annual incomes of \$1 million and higher and, along with other targeted budget reductions, brings in about \$100 million annually.

Lawmakers also sent a package of energy conservation bills to the governor for his signature -- a package requiring new or renovated state buildings to meet certain standards of energy-efficiency, boosting to 20 percent the portion of state energy derived from renewable sources, and new funds to decrease energy demand and increase energy supply.

To address the increasing foreclosures in the state, the legislature approved a foreclosure reform bill, making mortgage fraud a crime, extending the foreclosure timetable from 15 days to 150.

Capital Budget

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could -- my proposed reconciliation of the capital budget. That gave us a reality check of what we could afford to fit into the budget, and what we couldn't.

So what's in the CIP budget we're proposing? First, we made a very significant investment in the school system. Many of our elementary schools have serious capacity issues, and we've done our best to fund those with the most pressing needs. We also funded modernizations for the high schools, though we had to delay them slightly simply because modernizations are so expensive.

We listened to you when you said you wanted us to invest in your communities. Therefore, our CIP contains funding for renovations at small recreation centers like Plum Gar and Ross Boddy, and fully funds the new Gaithersburg library. We're also continuing to make significant investments in our existing transportation infrastructure—we know how important roads are in our county!—as well as in new projects. And we're doing so in a way that's sustainable. We're staying within our affordability guidelines so we ensure that we can continue to make good investments in our county.

More than anything—and I'm saying this again because it's important—we wanted reality in budgeting. The last thing I wanted was for residents to be led on for several months thinking a particular project was going to be funded, only to have the rug yanked out at the last minute.

Over the next few weeks, the Council will be reviewing minor CIP budget amendments that the County Executive has submitted. Final passage of the CIP budget will occur concurrently with the operating budget on May 22. I've been very interested in the feedback I've received so far on this new approach to the CIP budget, and we'll keep listening as we work.

Facing Foreclosure? Ask For Help!

More than half of those facing foreclosure never ask for help. I know it can be embarrassing, but don't be afraid to ask for assistance. Most foreclosures take three to six months, and the State Assembly has passed legislation requiring that the foreclosure timetable be lengthened from 15 days to 150. That means you've got some time to perhaps get things sorted out -- provided you ask for help, that is.

[Home Owners Preserving Equity \(HOPE\)](#) is a state program that provides access to counseling services and resources for homeowners needing to refinance. Help is also available from the [Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection](#) at (240) 777-3636.

Home Owners Preserving Equity (HOPE)
[\(http://www.mdhope.org/\)](http://www.mdhope.org/)

State Hotline: 1-(877)-462-7555

Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection: (240) 777-3636

National hotline: 888-995-4673

Knapp Hosts Community Meeting to Discuss Parking Issues

On Monday, April 28, at 7:00 p.m., I'll be hosting an Open Mike community forum to discuss the community's concerns regarding the parking of commercial and recreational vehicles on county roadways. This meeting is open to anyone -- especially those with strong feelings on parking in their neighborhoods.



Join me at the Germantown Library, Room A -- I want to hear from you!

WHAT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Open Mike Meeting on Community Parking	Monday, April 28	7:00 p.m.	Germantown Library, Room A 19840 Century Boulevard Germantown, MD 20874

Councilmember Mike Knapp

100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
 Rockville, MD 20850
 (240) 777-7955

Chairman's Corner**Operating Budget Tops PHED Committee Agenda**

No surprises here -- the PHED committee will spend the rest of the month working on the FY2009 Operating Budget. Given the breadth of the committee's oversight, we'll be meeting almost daily to ensure we give agencies as much time and attention as we can before making our final recommendations to the full Council.

The budget for Park and Planning will take several days to discuss, and we'll devote several long sessions to some of the smaller, but equally as critical, agencies, such as the Hearing Examiner, People's Counsel, Board of Appeals, and Urban Districts. I look forward to our discussions -- and I'm interested in your thoughts as well, so keep those e-mails coming.

PHED Committee Schedule

The information is subject to change, so please check the Council's website as dates near for updated information. Unless otherwise indicated, all committee meetings will convene in the 7th Floor hearing room of the Council Office Building.

DATE	TIME	MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION
April 21	9:30 a.m.	FY2009 Operating Budget - Park and Planning (<i>continued</i>)
April 23	9:30 a.m.	FY2009 Operating Budget - Regional Services Centers - Urban Districts - Hearing Examiner - People's Counsel - Recreation (<i>continued</i>)
April 24	2:00 p.m.	FY2009 Operating Budget - Board of Appeals - NDA: Historical Activities - Department of Permitting Services (<i>includes fees and review of customer service issues</i>)
April 28	2:00 p.m.	FY2009 Operating Budget - Park and Planning (<i>continued</i>)
May 1	9:30 a.m.	FY2009 Operating Budget - Housing Initiative Fund - Department of Housing and Community Affairs - CIP adjustment: affordable housing acquisition
May 2	9:30 a.m.	FY2009 Operating Budget - To be determined

Housing Commission to Open New Customer Service Centers



The Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) of Montgomery County will be opening two new customer service centers to provide participants in the HOC rental housing program with the opportunity to receive services, answer questions, and get up-to-the-minute information. One new customer service center will open May 1 in Gaithersburg; the second will open during the summer in Silver Spring. Previously, most HOC clients were required to travel to the one center in Kensington for services.

Anyone living in Montgomery County who participates in an HOC rental housing program will be able to receive services at the new centers. Trained staff at the centers will be available to meet one-on-one with clients or landlords to answer questions, transact HOC housing program business and provide information about HOC programs and services. New computer software will also enable HOC housing specialists to access client records and provide services, regardless of which center residents visit.

In several months, HOC will be holding an open house at their new Gaithersburg Customer Services Center to give members of the community the opportunity to tour the center and learn about HOC and its service to clients.

HOC is Montgomery County's housing authority, providing affordable housing and supportive services for low- and moderate-income families and individuals throughout the county. More information can be found on their website at <http://www.hocmc.org/>.

"Going Green"

County Committed to Building Two Methane-to-Energy Facilities

As part of its ongoing efforts to reduce carbon emissions, Montgomery County recently signed an agreement with the [Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority](#) to install two new landfill gas-to-energy facilities, one at Oaks Landfill and the other at Gude Landfill.

Together, the Oaks and Gude facilities will capture landfill gas (methane) that is currently being flared -- that is, burnt off -- and turn it into electricity. When fully operational, the reduction in greenhouse gases provided by these facilities will be equivalent to removing annual emissions from 33,000 cars, or planting 44,000 acres of forest each year.

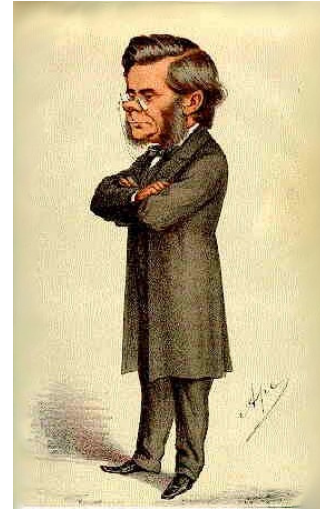
[Take](#)

Observation Drive Extension Advances; Work on MD109 Under Way

Got a road that needs repairing? A traffic light that's out? Is there a street or intersection that you think needs a stop sign or crosswalk? One of my responsibilities is to make sure someone knows about it -- and to do what I can to get you information on your question or request as quickly as possible.

I stay in regular contact with the [Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation](#) (DPWT) and the [Maryland State Highways Administration](#) (MSHA), and provide each agency with a list of projects that need addressing in the Upcounty. Both agencies receive countless requests each week, and getting a response back can take some time. So bear with me -- if you don't see a particular project listed here, that doesn't mean it has been forgotten or neglected, but rather that I haven't received an updated report on its progress this month.

With this in mind, the Road Scholar section of The Open Mike provides an opportunity to give you the latest information received from DPWT, MSHA, and others on the progress of requests that have been submitted on your behalf. It's also an opportunity for you to [let me know](#) of other projects that may need to be undertaken in your community.



Got question or suggestion about road repairs in your area? [E-mail the Road Scholar](#) and let us know.

Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation Projects

Observation Drive Update: DPWT will be completing Phase I of the Facility Planning Study for the extension of Observation Drive, linking Observation Drive to Stringtown Road in Germantown. In November 2007, DPWT held a public workshop to present the alternatives that met the purpose and need of the study and to solicit public input. Based on public comments and other factors, DPWT presented a new alignment in March 2008, *Alternative 4*, as the preferred alignment. This recommendation will be further reviewed by the Council and other lawmakers.

The next steps in the study are (1) preparation of a project prospectus; (2) presentation of the prospectus to the Planning Board for approval, and, pending approval, (3) advancement to the engineering stage.

Public input is sought and encouraged on this project. For regular updates, you may want to add your name to the Observation Drive Extended study project mailing list. To do so, please contact Marsha Wheeler-Christ at (240) 777-6174.

Maryland State Highway Administration Projects

Safety and Resurfacing Project along MD 109: Work began in late March on the resurfacing of MD 109 (Beallsville/Old Hundred Road) between MD 28 (Darnestown Road) and the bridge over Little Monocacy River. The \$2.5 million project will include culvert pipe replacement and cleaning, traffic barrier removal and disposal, curb and gutter installation, grinding and patching of the existing roadway, resurfacing the existing roadway, and new pavement markings. The project is expected to be completed by autumn, weather permitting. Variable message signs, arrow panels, drums and concrete barriers will guide motorists through the work zone. During construction motorists can expect daytime lane closures and possible lane shifts along MD 109 on weekdays between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., and between 7:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday.

County Council Public Hearings Calendar

Supplemental Appropriations, Personnel Bills Top Hearing Agenda

Don't be shy! The County Council regularly holds public hearings at which we actively seek your input, thoughts, comments, and suggestions. The policies, amendments, and legislation under consideration aren't just pieces of paper; they have a very real impact on you and the lives of your fellow citizens. For this reason, residents are always encouraged to attend the public hearings and give us your views. Hearings are held in the Council's main meeting room on the 7th Floor of the County Office Building at 100 Maryland Avenue in Rockville. ([Click here for a map.](#)) If you wish to testify on any of the items listed below, please call (240) 777-7931.

One more thing -- the hearing schedule can change rapidly, so always check the [County Council's home page](#) to get the most up-to-date information.

DATE	TIME	MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION
April 22	1:30 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intent to consider increasing FY2009 General Fund tax rate above the Constant Yield Tax Rate (CYTR) - Resolution to amend FY2009 Transportation Fees, Charges and Fares - Resolution to establish FY2009 Solid Waste Service Charges - Resolution to establish FY2009 Water Quality Protection Charge - Resolution to amend fees for Department of Permitting Services
	1:30 p.m.	Special Appropriations for MCPS: <i>FY2008 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY2007-12 CIP:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$821,000 for Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement <i>FY2008 Capital Budget:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$3,125,000 for Relocatable Classrooms
	1:30 p.m.	Supplemental Appropriation to the County Government's FY2008 Capital Budget and Amendment to the FY2007-12 CIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DPWT, \$12,742,000 for Ride On Bus Fleet
	1:30 p.m.	Zoning Text Amendment 8-04 : Accessory Structures - Solar Panels
April 29	1:30 p.m.	Supplemental Appropriations to the County Government's FY2008 Capital Budget and Amendments to the FY2007-12 CIP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fire and Rescue Service: \$2,700,000 for Maintenance Depot Equipment - Public Libraries: \$5,00,000 for Silver Spring Library land acquisition - Police: \$2,392,000 for Outdoor Firearms Training Center - Police: \$3,200,000 for 3rd District Police Station
	1:30 p.m.	Supplemental Appropriation to the FY2008 Operating Budget: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MCPS, \$3,500,000 and a categorical transfer of \$350,000 for Provision for Future Supported Projects
	1:30 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expedited Bill 6-08: Personnel - Retirement - Amendments - Expedited Bill 7-08: Personnel - Retirement - Group F, Mandatory Retirement - Expedited Bill 8-08: Personnel - Disability Retirement - Group G - Expedited Bill 9-08: Personnel - Fire & Rescue Volunteers - Death Benefit - Expedited Bill 10-08: Personnel - Deferred Compensation - Enrollment - Expedited Bill 11-08: Personnel - Retirement - Benefit Structure - Guaranteed Retirement Income Plan (GRIP) - Expedited Bill 12-08: Personnel - Retirement - Retirement Incentive Program

[Take](#)

Vox Pops**Voices From Around the Upcounty Community**

A Note from Mike: I receive countless phone calls, e-mails, and letters each day. Most are passionate, many are frustrated, and a few are downright funny . . . but all of them are thoughtful and well-intended. I think readers of The Open Mike will be interested to hear what their Upcounty neighbors have to say, whether they're across the street or across the county. With that in mind, the "Vox Pops" section of my newsletter features highlights from some of the correspondence and phone calls I've received in my office over the past month.

**Project Delays: A Tough, But Correct, Decision**

"I wholeheartedly support the concept of delaying or spreading out some of the capital projects. In uncertain times like we are facing, the demand for basic services may very well increase. Even the most vocal critics of

Montgomery County government as a whole have to understand that it is also equally passionate county taxpayers who support the high standards in education, cultural arts, entertainment, strong neighborhoods, parks, preservation areas, retail centers and public safety forces that are second to none . . . There is definitely a certain credibility that comes across to me as a taxpayer, that maybe our neighborhood school might not get spruced up right away, but if I need the police, fire or EMS, or even just some guidance or answers from a county office, they'll be available." -- *Bob, Montgomery County*

"I think President Michael Knapp has made a very tough and very wise decision. He has suggested a budget cut of \$363 million in new construction and renovations of schools, libraries, fire and police stations. I remind the Council that these deductions are only recommended delays and these cuts do solve the budget problem. I know this is a hard decision that none of us want to make but until the economy improves, these are decisions that must be made." -- *Steven*

Gaithersburg Students Deserve a New School

"We have been fighting and have been promised a new high school in Gaithersburg since my kids were in kindergarten. One is graduating next year! This school is old and pieced together. We have been patient, we have encouraged our kids to do their best, bring in good scores on the MSAs and they have done the Montgomery County School system proud. How about returning the favor?" -- *Beverly, Gaithersburg*

Keep County Employee Salaries in Check

"While I was somewhat bemused that the county needed to provide its executive with a private bathroom because of 'security concerns,' I am upset with the current proposed pay increases for its employees, which are excessive. The increase given for longevity, exceeds the increase that the Federal government gives for assuming additional duties and responsibilities. I don't know if anyone has studied turnover rates, done in-depth compensation analyses (to include benefits as well as compensation), but I strongly urge you to oppose this all too generous increase." -- *Charles, Olney*

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Vox Pops

Rockville, We Have A Problem . . .

"The County Executive has indeed handed you a problem. His failure to produce a budget that does not exceed the county charter limit, and is unsustainable, has precipitated the need for drastic action. . . . We just cannot sustain an increase in taxes as dictated by the Executive's budget in view of the increases in state taxes, fuel oil, gasoline, food, etc., currently being faced. The County has grown fat with new and expanding programs over the past few years. These and others need to be independently evaluated now. Drastic action has to be taken to reduce County programs! For now, hold the line on new spending increases, such as salary increases beyond the cost of living, and step increases." -- *William, North Potomac*



One for an Energy Tax...

"I don't know the details, but I applaud your consideration of a County tax on energy. To align it appropriately, can you make it a carbon tax? That would put Montgomery County in the vanguard of a movement the entire world is soon to follow as we take seriously the damage we are inflicting on the earth's climate -- and hence on ourselves and future generations -- through our carbon-related greenhouse-gas emissions. Carbon taxes could be used to reduce other taxes, especially those that disproportionately affect lower-income households, as well as to promote renewable energy. And the modestly higher energy prices would encourage energy efficiency." -- *Robert, Takoma Park*

But on the Other Hand...

"IF you are going to approve yet ANOTHER energy price/tax increase on our backs then PEPCO should be forced to bring back their Kilowatchers or other rewards programs for those of us who are not using AC or other great energy wasters. I'm tired of paying more and getting far less!" -- *Kathy, Silver Spring*

Speed Cameras Need Some Integrity

"Please know that the speed cameras set up on both sides of the Town of Poolesville are about to impact the economy of this small town. The speed cameras are clearly being used as a revenue source, not for any valid safety issue . . . Placement of speed cameras must be done with at least a minimum level of integrity. I propose to you that the two speed cameras going out of Poolesville fail any integrity test. There is a campaign being organized to 'Avoid Poolesville' for the month of May in an effort to show how upset, disgusted and disgruntled people are on the use and placement of these cameras. Unfortunately, the merchants and businesses in Poolesville will feel the impact." -- *Ellie, Poolesville*

But Wait! There's More!

I'm blogging now, too -- you can read my blog, "Starting with the Socks," at www.montgomerycountymd.gov. I promise to try to update more often. Really.